Even Brand New Computers Can Have Security Flaws

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Even brand new computers can have security flaws in their operating systems and software. When discovered, these flaws are exploited by hackers to gain access to your computer. Fortunately, software companies regularly release small programs to update your system and eliminate the dangerous flaws, which are easy to download and install.

Install Updates Automatically

In many cases, software programs will do the work for you — with automatic updates, your programs stay more secure without constant monitoring. Make sure the automatic update feature is enabled on all software

- Operating systems such as Microsoft XP and Mac OS X
- Antivirus software such as Symantec AntiVirus
- Web browsers such as Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox
- Productivity software such as Microsoft Office
- Design software such as Photoshop and InDesign

For more information about enabling automatic updates, go to the program's Help menu and search for "automatic update." For those software programs that do not update automatically, visit the manufacturer's Web site for available versions and patches.

Update Software when Prompted

The automatic update tool will prompt you that updates are available for that software program. When you see this prompt, make sure to follow the directions provided and download and install the updates. This will keep your computer up to date, secure, and running smoothly.

Stay Informed of Security Risks

Even though your computer can update automatically, it is best to be aware of new security holes and system flaws. Make it a habit to visit the Web site of your operating system manufacturer or other reputable sources for the latest news about security risks and what you can do to combat them.

Stay Virus-Free From Off Campus

If your computer currently gets Symantec AntiVirus (SAV) updates from campus servers — especially likely for students living in residence halls &madash; you will not get the updates that keep you secure when you move or use your laptop off-campus. A quick download is all you need to get SAV updates for computers outside the NU Network. Just use the LiveUpdate Switch Tool found on the Symantec Reference Page on the NUIT Web site.